



# culture in context

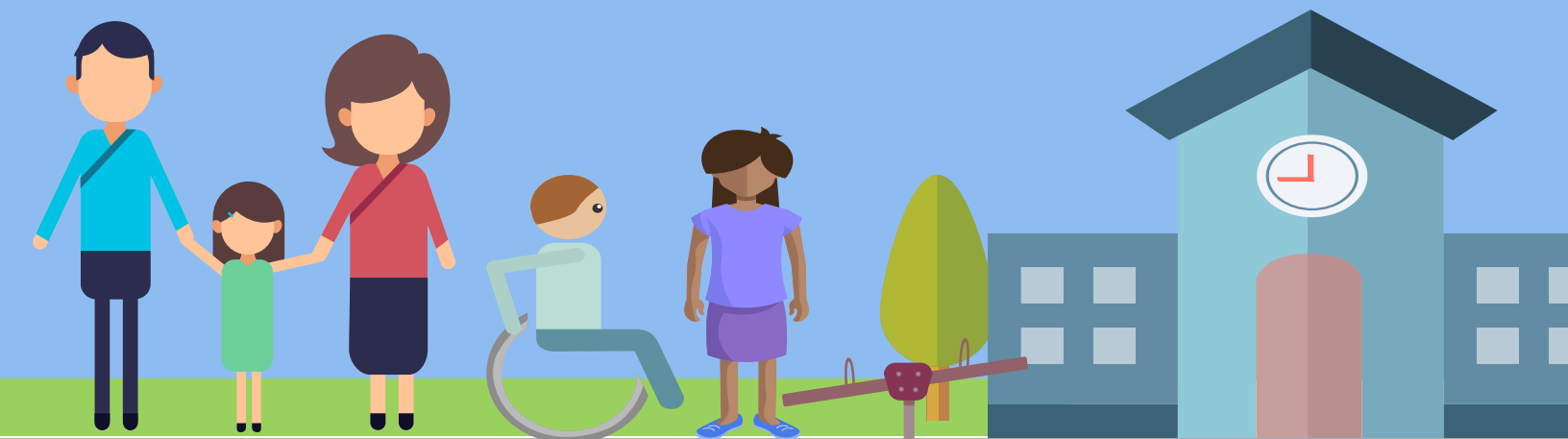
## Parenting a CHILD WITH a COMPLEX DISABILITY

Complex disabilities are impacted by many components of culture. Every culture understands disability differently, and understanding those beliefs is essential to providing quality support to a family. Providers should also remember that every family culture is unique and that every member of the family contributes to the specific family culture. Here are some cultural considerations that are important when working with a family of a child with a significant disability.

**1. Community:** Children with disabilities often encounter some barriers to accessing their community, and family isolation is common after a child with significant needs is born. Consider how you can support the family in accessing equipment, educating friends and family members, and using respite providers and other resources that allow the family to engage with others in their community.

**2. Participation:** Some cultural milestones and experiences can be more difficult to access for children with disabilities. Early interventionists can ask the family about events that are important to them help with ways to access or modify these experiences so that all children can participate. Supporting the family in prioritizing participation early is an important way to think about a child's abilities and strengths rather than focusing on deficits and missed opportunities.

**3. Focus on Strengths:** The way that early interventionists talk to and about a child with complex disabilities can influence the way the family thinks about their child and the future. We should avoid too much discussion on evaluation results, deficits, and needs. Instead, focus conversations on child strengths, ways to have fun together, and opportunities for learning new things.



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